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A BRIEF  
REPLY

TO THE  
GRAND ENQUIRY,  
What must I do to be saved?

To which are added,

Some peculiar DOCTRINES,  
AND  
OBSERVATIONS upon them,  
In which they are represented as unscriptural.

ALSO,

The PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL  
At the ORDINATION of the  
Rev. DANIEL FOSTER,  
In NEW-BRAINTREE.

*Mr. Daniel Foster*

---

O foolish Teachers who hath bewitched you, that you should  
pervert the Truth!  
May the Cockatrice Egg never hatch.

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MASSACHUSETTS-BAY:  
WORCESTER, Printed by ISAIAH THOMAS.

**T**HE following thoughts, were at first  
designed for private use ; but after  
perusal, for the honour of truth, the good  
of my fellow sinners, the shame of errone-  
ous teachers, and the destruction of error,  
I have obtained liberty to publish them to  
the world ; which may the blessing of God  
attend to the latest ages.

I am, Reader, a sincere well-wisher  
to your best interest,

An Inhabitant of New-Braintree

January 1779



S I R,

**I** HAVE of late been entertained with strange things from the pulpit, which have caused no small uneasiness in my mind, with regard to the essentials of the Gospel, lest they should be brought down, and rendered palatable to the pride of the carnal heart.

For, in my apprehension, those scriptural doctrines, which serve to exalt the saviour and abase the creature, such as the depravity of the human nature, and the rich, free, sovereign grace of God, in the recovery of lost sinners to himself, by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, are evidently struck at.

I therefore seriously ask an answer to that all-important question---“ What must I do to be saved.” *Acts xvi. 30.*

I the rather make this enquiry, as I have lately been taught the following doctrines, viz.

1. That men in a natural unregenerate state, can do those things which are well-pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

2. That the special, efficacious influences of the Holy Spirit in conversion are unnecessary.

3. Which asserts an unregenerate man has as much power or ability to take possession of the heavenly Canaan, as Israel had to take possession of the earthly Canaan,

4. Some, saith the preacher, hold to an absolute, personal, unconditional election, which (adds he) is absurd and ridiculous, and blessed be God, it is false doctrine : For Christ did as much for Judas as for St. Paul.

5. I am told that the power of the will, though an Arminian tenet, is a good one ; that every man has power within himself, from means and motives held up, savingly to chuse or refuse. †

6. That if I repent and believe the Gospel, God has engaged that he will give me a new heart and would cause me to walk in his statutes ; and if I do not God will break his covenant. As in Deuteronomy.

From the apostle's mentioning the breaking off of the Jews, and grafting in of the Gentiles, I am told, that the

† By a Transient Person

former dispensation was a faith of profession, and the present dispensation means no more, else the apostle's reasoning is foolishness. Consequently tells me that saving grace is unnecessary for complying with any ordinance.

8. I am taught that creeds, catechisms, confessions of faith, church covenants, &c. are a long rope of which the devil has the knot-end. That the devil could not have done so much mischief without them, and that there could not be a reformation till these were thrown aside: But then he added, that children might be taught the catechise, provided the most dangerous parts were left out.

9. I am told on account of the righteousness of Christ the divine attributes harmonise, justice could demand no more: Christ partaking human nature has elevated and restored it to favour; and the whole human race are upon better standing than Adam in innocency.

10. The gospel is a remedial law, brought down to our capacities, and that we are able to obey its precepts.

11. The depravity of human nature is denied, and original sin is asserted not to be damning.

12. I have been taught that original sin and imputed guilt is as unscriptural as the Indian's philosophy was unphilosophical, when he said, the world was held up by a great Indian, the Indian stood upon a tortoise, and the tortoise stood upon nothing.

13. That an unregenerate man could act a divine faith, or put forth a saving act, as well as the regenerate.

14. I am taught that a saving faith is an assent of the will, founded on the understanding, but the consent of the will was no part of it, illustrated by this similitude, '*I believe there is such a place as London, because I have seen the history of it.*' And the life of faith is works; And that God is not the immediate author of faith, but the scriptures mediately or by means. And the faith of devils differs not from the faith of believers, but in this, one has works, the other has none.

These, Sir, are the doctrines I have been taught to believe; pray be so kind as to give me, in brief, your sentiments upon them, and you will greatly oblige one, who is *searching after Truth.*





The R E P L Y.

*Dear Sir,*

**B**Y your address you discover a desire to be freed from error, and to be led into the knowledge of divine truth.

It will afford me peculiar pleasure, if I may be happily instrumental, in the hand of God, of affording you some little assistance in this most weighty concern.

Your first enquiry is, *'What must I do to be saved?'* I would direct you to the apostle's answer, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Not that any person if left to the inclinations of his own depraved heart, will ever feel a disposition savingly to close with Christ. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.* Rom. viii. 7. *For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* Eph. ii. 8.

Man is not born a believer, faith springs not up of itself, from some hidden seeds in our degenerate nature; but is altogether of a foreign extract, it is of a supernatural birth.

None that give credit to the Bible, or even consult their own experience and observation, but must confess, that this grace of faith is a holy principle, which no man brings into the world with him, for we are born with an evil heart within us ; are all included in the number of the many, who by *one man's disobedience were made sinners*. There is an inbred principle of infidelity, an hidden root of bitterness, in the corrupt nature, which we have all derived from apostate Adam. Foolishness, says the wisest man, is bound up in the heart of a child, and nothing can effectually root it out, - but the *rod of his strength, who maketh his people willing in the day of his power*.

Unrenewed men are as much at enmity in their minds, against the grace of God, and the merits of Christ, in the scripture account of them, as they are to his holiness and moral government.

This appears evident in convicted persons, when enlightened by the holy spirit, they see themselves under a broken law, and in extreme danger of perishing forever, without an interest in Christ,

a new heart, and a change from nature to grace: Yet how great is their attachment to the law as a covenant of works, how does the spirit of the pharisee operate and prevail within them! That however much they may express their desire toward a saviour, and a willingness to be justified by Christ; it is plain they are for compounding matters, mingling law and gospel, or else pass on in a middle way between them: At best they are for washing their sins by the tears of repentance, joined with faith in the blood of Christ, or else hope to make a righteousness of their prayers and duties, thinking by these to recommend themselves to the grace of God, to obtain Christ, and get entitled to his benefits: At most the pride of their stubborn hearts will not suffer them to come to Christ as naked forlorn sinners, wretched and miserable, trembling under fearful apprehensions of their guilt and danger, as worthless, helpless and hopeless in themselves considered, depending alone on the perfect righteousness of Christ for justification and acceptance with God.

Hence it is manifest, that holy and

unfeigned faith, is so far from being a connatural principle in us, that by nature we are utter strangers to it, nay enemies against it.

Nor is this faith an acquired habit or the natural effect of human endeavours, which we procure to ourselves, by virtue of our own moral improvements on natural reason and conscience : For the truly regenerate are *born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God.* John i, 13.

And when it shall please God to bring you savingly to believe in Christ, he will give you to see that salvation is all of grace, of pure, unmingled grace, that all boasting may be excluded from man, and all the glory redound to his great name. That the law is spiritual, but that you are carnal, sold under sin. He will shew you that all works produced by human endeavours, and even faith itself, as it is the act of the creature, are entirely set aside in the grand business of our justification before God ; and that you stand in the most absolute need of a better righteousness than your own, even the perfect righteousness of Christ to denominate you righteous before his en-

lightened tribunal. That nothing short of an almighty power can take away the stony heart, and effectually renew the will. He will then hold up a saviour to view, such a saviour as is exactly calculated to relieve you under your perishing circumstances ; and will enable you to hunger and thirst after Christ ; He will give you to see that in Jesus the Redeemer all fulness dwells ; all fulness of merit and righteousness, of grace, sanctification and salvation ; and this for the unworthy, for the most guilty among men, for *whosoever will*, even for the chief of sinners.

If you know these things by happy experience, may you still go on *rejoicing in Christ Jesus, putting no confidence in the Flesh*. But if not, may the Lord give you a will, a heart, cordially to accept of Christ ; may he make bear his arm, and by the powerful operations of the blessed spirit, effectually draw off your affections from the love of sin, from the love of the world, and the things of it ; may he draw you to himself, and savingly unite you to Jesus Christ by a faith of divine operation ; that you may live to God, honour his great name, and bring

forth much fruit to the praise of his glorious grace, that hereafter you may join with saints and angels in sublime ascriptions of praise to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb forever and ever.

As to the doctrines you have been taught, viz.

1. "That men in a natural, unregenerate state, can do those things which are well-pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God."

This appears to me both *dangerous* and *unscriptural*. 1. Dangerous for it leads the sinner to build his hopes for heaven on a false foundation, even upon his own works: But what say the scriptures, *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor. iii. 11. *By grace are ye saved; not of works, lest any man should boast.* Eph. ii. 8, 9. Now if Jesus Christ be the only foundation for men to build the salvation of their precious souls upon, then to build upon works as a foundation must be infinitely dangerous. 2. It is *unscriptural*; for, says Christ, John iii. 6. *that which is born of Flesh, is Flesh.* And says the apostle, Rom. viii. 8. *They that*

*are in the Flesh cannot please God.* By being in the flesh, must mean man in his natural unregenerate state, for being born of the flesh is directly opposed by our Saviour himself to being born of the spirit : He therefore adds, *Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* We read expressly, Heb. xi. 6. *That without faith it is impossible to please God.* But man in his natural state has not faith, therefore it is impossible for man in his natural state to do those things which are well pleasing in the sight of God.

2. "That regeneration, and the special efficacious influences of the holy spirit in conversion are unnecessary."

The former part of this article is diametrically opposite our saviour's conference with Nicodemus, and to the import of the whole New-Testament, and is therefore false. And as to the special, efficacious influences of the holy spirit in conversion as unnecessary, these texts may prove the assertion unscriptural, Eph. i. 19, 20. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.*

2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. With Eph. ii. 1. 10.

3. "Which asserts, an unregenerate man has as much power, or ability to take possession of the heavenly Canaan, as Israel had to take possession of the earthly Canaan."

If by power, or ability, he means a natural power, I shall not contend with him; but if he means a moral power, that men have a heart, a will, while unregenerate, to love God, to chuse his service, to believe in Christ, and accept of salvation, as offered in the gospel through him, I must deny the assertion, and hold it unscriptural: Else why does our saviour complain, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*, John v. 40. It is represented in scripture as being given unto men to believe, *Philip. i. 2, 9*: And says Christ, John vi. 44, *No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him*.

4. "Some, says the preacher, (I had almost said impostor) hold to an absolute, personal, unconditional election; which, adds he, is absurd and ridiculous, and blessed be God it is false doctrine:



For Christ died as much for Judas as for St. Paul."

That there is a certain remnant that shall be saved, and this by virtue of election is plain from the following passages. *Vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory*, Rom. ix. 23. *The election hath obtained*, Rom. xi. 7. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*, Acts xiii. 48. And 2: Theff. ii. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation*, &c. It was requisite that election should be absolute, because of the absoluteness of God's decree touching the death of his Son, unto which he was fore-ordained unrepealably. 1. Pet. i. 20. *He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. *And it was not possible that cup should pass from him*, Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. Now if it be a thing below the prudence of men to lay down the price, without securing the purchase; then surely the wisdom of God could not determine the death of his son, for men's salvation, and yet leave the salvation of these very men at an uncertainty; which it must have been, if their election had not been absolute. And that election is personal, is plain from this;

the design of God in the death of Christ could not otherwise be secured. Had the design been to purchase salvation for believers, without ascertaining the persons that should believe, it had been uncertain whether *any* would be saved, because uncertain whether *any* would believe. If *certain* that some would believe, this certainty must be decreed. For nothing future could be certain otherwise; and if it was decreed that *some* should believe, the individuals of that some must be decreed also; for faith is the gift of God, and could not be foreseen in any, but whom he had decreed to give it unto. Which laid together are a good demonstration that those Christ died for, were as well pre-ordained, as that he should die for them, and that definitely and by name.

It is also unconditional.

To derive election from any root, beside the good pleasure of God, is to frustrate the principal end of man's salvation, viz, *the glory of God's grace*, Eph. i. 6, 2, 7. This attribute of all the rest, he will not have eclipsed, nor infringed upon; it is so divinely sacred, as not to admit the least human touch; for which very

cause, the Lord hath so contrived that blessed design of his glory, that all boasting is excluded, *and no Flesh shall glory in his presence*, 1. Cor. i. 29. But if any thing in the creature, any good works foreseen, be entitled to the causality of election, flesh will glory; and instead of excluding man's boasting, grace itself will be excluded. See Rom. xi. 6.

It is said "Christ died as much for Judas as for St. Paul:" This I deny. Judas is acknowledged by all, to be the son of perdition, and to be eternally lost: But those for whom Christ died are appointed to obtain salvation through him, 1 Theff. v. 9. Christ is said expressly to die for his people, Matt. i. 21. His sheep, John x. 11, 12. His church, Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25: As distinguished from the world, Rom. v. 8. Whence, says one, "We may surely conclude, that Christ died not for all and every one. Not for those he never knew, whom he hates, whom he hardens, on whom he will not shew mercy, who were before of old ordained to condemnation: In a word for a reprobate, for the world for which he would not pray."

Here perhaps you will object, "How can the offers of salvation be said to be made

with sincerity to those for whom Christ never died?" To this I answer in the words of a learned divine. "Those to whom the gospel is preached, are obliged to believe that Christ is God, the son of God, the true Messiah, &c. according to the tenor of the revelation made to them; and may justly be condemned for not believing in him as such, even though he died not for them; for that he died for them, is not what they are obliged to believe, that being no part of the revelation made to them; nor will they be condemned for not believing that he died for them, but for their neglect, contempt and unbelief of him and his gospel."

5. "I am told that the power of the will, though an Arminian tenet, is a good one; that every man has power within himself from means and motives held up, savingly to chuse or refuse."

To this it may be replied, as to unregenerate persons they have no will, or moral power, to chuse and prefer spiritual and divine things; they desire not the knowledge of God's ways; their carnal minds are enmity against God, and are not subject to his law, nor can they be subject to it, without the special grace of God. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Psa.*

110. 3. *Who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the Flesh, &c.* John i. 13.

6. "That if I repent and believe the Gospel, God has engaged that he will give me a new heart, and would cause me to walk in his statutes, and if I do not, God will break his covenant, as in *Deuteronomy*."

Here it may be observed, that no person does truly repent and believe in Christ, but he that has a *new heart*. I hope no one will be so absurd as to assert, that an unregenerate person, while such, can act saving faith and evangelical repentance: No, they must be created in Christ Jesus, and have the spirit of Christ put in them first. Hence faith and repentance are not conditions of the new heart, but the fruits and gracious exercises of it. These by the influences of his spirit, God will enable to walk in his statutes, and to persevere through faith and holiness unto salvation. *For having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.* John xiii. 1. Jer. xxxi. 31.

7. "From the apostle's mentioning, the breaking off of the Jews, and grafting in of the Gentiles, I am told, that the former dispensation was a faith of profession, and the present dispensation means no more, else the apostle's reasoning is foolishness. Con-

requently tells me that saving grace is unnecessary for complying with any ordinance."

We may here observe, that no dispensation, ever given from God to men admits of hypocrisy; he always requires the heart, and even under the Mosaic dispensation, those that were ceremonially polluted, were forbidden to partake of the passover, notwithstanding their profession. And under the holy dispensation of the gospel, the church of Christ is called a spiritual house, and believers are said to be lively stones of which it is built, an holy priest had to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ, 1 Peter ii. 5. But what unfit materials, are hypocritical professors, who are dead in trespasses and sins, to make up a part of this spiritual building? The gospel therefore requires holiness of heart and life in all those that make profession of their faith in Christ. *And let every one, that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19. God is a spirit and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24.*

8. "I am taught that creeds, catechisms, confessions of faith, church covenants, &c. are a long rope of which the devil has the knot-end; that the devil could not have

done so much mischief without them as with them, and that there would not be a reformation till these were thrown aside, &c." These though not infallible, are to be looked upon, so far as they agree with the word of God, to be good directories for our searching out the mind and will of God; and ought to be made use of as such, by us: Which to deny, is to deny the practice of the reformed churches in all periods. As to their being a long rope, &c. I think it a very indecent and unjustifiable expression. And as to there being no reformation till these are thrown aside; this we know, there have been glorious out-pourings of the spirit in the churches where these have been carefully attended to, and we hope for still greater. *Hold fast therefore the form of sound words.* 2 Tim. i. 12.

9. "I am told on account of the righteousness of Christ, the divine attributes harmonise, justice could demand no more. Christ partaking human nature has elevated and restored it to favour; and the whole human race are upon better standing than Adam in innocency."

That the divine attributes do harmonise in the justification and salvation of them that believe in Christ, I hope none will deny:

But to say, that Christ by partaking human nature has restored it to divine favour, &c. is contradictory to scripture and common sense: For if all men are restored to the favour of God, then all men will be saved, but say the scriptures, *Many be called, but few chosen*, Mat. xx. 16. vii. 14. And is it not imposing upon common sense to say, that persons dead in sin, under the wrath of God, and a moral inability to please God, which is the scripture account of the whole human race by nature, are upon better standing than Adam in innocency, who was holy, in the image, favour and enjoyment of God?

10. "The gospel is a remedial law, brought down to our capacities, and that we are able to obey its precepts."

I find nothing in scripture for this: Besides, as one observes, it is a great mistake, to suppose that the conditions of this imaginary new law are easier, than the conditions of the old covenant of works. The case is much otherwise; he with whom the first covenant was made, had sufficient power and ability to fulfil all its conditions, and fully to come up to all its demands. But fallen creatures are morally incapable of performing sincere though imperfect o-



bedience ; they have naturally no sincerity, no truth in the inward parts, no principle of new obedience, nor does this pretended covenant supply them with any.

11. "The depravity of human nature is denied, and original sin asserted not to be damning."

To prove the depravity of human nature see Psalm li. 5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* With Psa. lviii, 3. Isa. xlvi, 8. "What is here said of David, says a learned divine, is true of all men ; since every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts, both in the old and in the new world, is evil, *Gen. vi, 5, and 8, 21.*" And that not only the wicked are estranged from the womb, but the elect of God, are by nature children of wrath even as others, *Eph. ii, 3.* Which suppose them to be guilty and polluted as others ; and indeed how should it be otherwise for *that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh.* That original sin is not damning appears false from this, *All sin in its own nature is damning, for sin, every sin is a transgression of the law of God, and is therefore exposed to its penalty, even to eternal death, Rom. vi. 23.* Therefore original sin must be damning.

12. "I have been taught that original sin

and imputed guilt, is as unscriptural as the Indian's philosophy was unphilosophical, when he said that the world was held up by a great Indian, the Indian stood upon a tortoise, and the tortoise stood upon nothing.\*

To prove original sin, or that we are born sinners, and imputed guilt, see Rom. v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Imputed guilt, I think is plain from the 19th verse, For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so, or in like manner, as it might be rendered by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Now how do men become righteous? Is it not by the righteousness of Christ, being imputed or made over to the soul, upon its receiving him by faith? If so, then by parity of reasoning we are made sinners by Adam's sin being imputed to us.

13. "That an unregenerate man could act a divine faith, or put forth a saving act as well as the regenerate."

This is to say, there may be the act where the habit is not; or that there may be an effect without a cause; which are equally

\* This was delivered in our pulpit by a transient person, which discovers to me, that he was as ignorant of the mysteries of the Gospel, as his Indian was of philosophy.

absurd : In order to act faith there must be the principle : for what says our saviour, *First make the tree good, then the fruit will be good ; for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.*

14. " I am taught that a saving faith is an assent of the will founded on the understanding, but the consent of the will was no part of it; illustrated by this similitude, *I believe there is such a place as London because I have seen the history of it.* And the life of faith is works : And that God is not the immediate author of faith, but the scriptures mediately, or by means : And the faith of devils differs not from the faith of believers, but in this, one has works, the other has none."

According to this, an historical faith, or the faith of assent, is saving. Hence the greatest profligate that barely assents to this, that Jesus is the Christ, has saving faith--- O monstrous ! If you set under such a ministry, I pity you, and the poor people there. The consent of the will is essential to a saving faith ; how can I be said truly to believe in Christ, except I receive him with my whole heart, and most cheerfully consent that Christ with all his benefits shall be mine, and I with all the powers of my

soul, will be his, and for him? This faith will work by love and purify the heart; and any thing short of this is but a dead faith: *To them that believe Christ is precious,* but to thousands that give their assent to the Bible as true, he is not precious: "They see neither form nor comeliness in him, why they should desire him." *But to as many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on his name, John i. 12.* And have not these the faith of consent think you? He adds, "the life of faith is works." I answer, no; good works, or holiness, are the necessary effects of a saving faith; but Christ is the life of faith, hence he is called the *believer's life*. He is the grand object of faith; hence, says he, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

God is the immediate author of faith; *Faith is the gift of God,* says the apostle, and though faith comes by hearing, yet barely hearing or attending on the means, does not produce faith, this is the special and immediate work of the spirit of God upon the soul, hence we read of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord," not men nor means, "opened." Notwithstanding it is the duty of all to attend upon the means,

for in this way God ordinarily communicates this special grace : In the disposals of saving faith he acts as sovereign, he gives it to whom he will and is under no obligations, but his mere good pleasure to bestow it upon any. The faith of believers is essentially different from that of devils in this---“ They have an apprehension, or sense of the supreme *holy beauty* and *comeliness* of divine things, as they are in themselves, or in their own nature. This the devils and damned in hell are and forever will be entirely destitute of.

*Your servant, &c.”*

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*At an ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL, holden at  
NEW-BRAINTREE, October 27, 1778, at the house  
of the Rev. Mr. BENJAMIN RUGGLES.*

P R E S E N T.

<p><i>Rev. Messrs. David White, dissent.</i> Isaac Jones, John Willard, Nathan Fisk, Isaac Foster, Ephraim Ward, Josiah Dana, Dan Foster, Joseph Appleton, <i>dissent.</i> Emerson Foster,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MESSENGERS.</p> <p><i>Deacon William Page, dissent.</i> <i>Deacon Solomon Rich,</i> Daniel Alden, Esq; <i>Deacon Jabez Crosby,</i> <i>Deacon Nathan Johnson,</i> Mr. John Phipps, <i>dissent.</i> <i>Deacon Jonas Rice.</i> <i>Deacon Hzekiah Griswold,</i> Mr. Samuel Haskell, <i>dissent.</i> <i>Deacon Joseph Torrey.</i></p>
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*Rev. Isaac Jones* was chosen Moderator, and *John Willard*, Scribe.

**T**HE Council was opened by the Moderator with prayer. A Committee from the church in New-Braintree waited upon the Council, informing them; that some persons had matters of grievance, which they were desirous of laying before the council. It was resolved to give them an hearing forthwith. The aggrieved accordingly appeared, and exhibited a paper, in which they, in general, represented Mr. *Daniel Foster*, Pastor elect of New-Braintree, as holding some principles in his public discourses, and private conversation, which are not agreeable to truth, and of a dangerous tendency. The complainants having no particular articles of charge, committed to writing, were directed by the Council to withdraw, and commit to writing, what were particular matters of grievance; which having done, they laid the paper before the council, and served Mr. *Foster* with a copy. The Council then adjourned to Wednesday morning 7 o'clock.

*Wednesday, October 28.* The council met according to adjournment. The aggrieved and Mr. *Foster* then appeared before the Council. The articles of grievance were then read, and Mr. *Foster's* answer to them; and both parties were fully heard.

*The Articles of Grievance, were as follows, viz.*

1. None will ever be excluded happiness, but those that exclude themselves as moral agents, infants included, the reason he gave, because where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; and it was not rational to think, that God would make a world, and then let the Devil run away with it.

2. In denying election, and in saying that Christ died as much for Judas as for St. Paul.

3. There is no enmity in man naturally against God.

4. Original sin is not damning.

5. That an unregenerate man could act a divine faith, or put forth a saving act as well as the regenerate.

6. In a funeral discourse, Mr. Foster said, it would not be asked in the great day how men believed, but how they obeyed.

The following is Mr. FOSTER'S REPLY to the allegations brought against him.

*To the venerable Council convened, and now sitting in New-Braintree.*

VENERABLE SIRS,

Last evening, 10 o'clock, I was waited upon with a copy of what a number of persons are pleased to call matters of grievance, signed Daniel Matthews.

I am very sorry those aggrieved had not bethought themselves in time, and favoured me with a copy of their allegations before the *punctum temporis*, of my being called upon to appear before this venerable body to answer for myself, touching those things whereof they accuse me. A proper time to prepare for his own defence, being ever granted the vilest malefactors: But though treated with such neglect and contempt, yet for the interest of truth, and being willing to grant my opponents a hearing, though in point of honour and even good manners, they are not entitled to such a favour, I will proceed to observe something upon the matters exhibited against me.

1. It is alledged that I said in a discourse from Gen. 3, and 9. as asserted in the first article of charge.

In answer to all which, I appeal to my notes.

2. They alledge that I deny election, and said that Christ died as much for Judas as for St. Paul. In a restrained sense.

3. They alledge that I said from the gospel feast, there is no enmity in man against God. This I fully deny as asserted.

4. They say that in private I said, original sin was not damning. This I own as my sentiment, though I do not recollect I ever said so.

Moreover, they charge me with saying as in the 5th article. In answer to which, I suppose he may act faith with divine assistance, equally with the greatest saint; neither can act without it.—If these brief replies are not satisfactory I crave the liberty of enlargement, before the venerable Council, as I have here no proper time to reply in a formal manner.

Worthy Gentlemen, your humble servant, DANIEL FOSTER.

A true copy.

Examined by Rev. BENJAMIN RUGGLES, Oct. 28 1778.

The Council being by themselves, then received from Mr. FOSTER a CONFESSION of his FAITH, which was read, and accepted as orthodox. Which was as follows, viz.

1. I believe there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus

2. I believe that when God made man, he gave him a law, holy, just and good, and that man had full power to keep that law; that man by sin broke the divine law, fell under the wrath of God, &c.

3. That God did not leave man to perish in this state of sin, but was self-moved to provide a saviour, his own eternal son.

4. That Christ, by doing and suffering, satisfied divine justice, brought in everlasting righteousness, for all that shall comply with the gospel in time.

5. That God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel.

6. That all who in time comply with the gospel, shall in the judgment be acquitted and rewarded with eternal life.

7. That the scriptures of the old and new Testament are the word of God, a perfect rule of faith and life.

8. I believe a Trinity in the God-head as the scriptures teach.

9. I believe that God does fore-know all things that do in time come to pass.

10. (That man by the fall, has lost his ability to do good, is averse to good) and dead in sin, and unable to convert himself by his own strength, and needs the special influences of the Spirit.\*

11. I believe that God did from eternity elect to life eternal, a certain number of fallen men, even all those who should in time believe in Christ, which I acknowledge infers a reprobation of the rest, i. e. all the finally impenitent.

The above I subscribe as my confession of faith, according to present light, waiting on God to give farther light, and ready to receive it when offered.

DANIEL FOSTER.

A true copy from the minutes.

The Council then proceeded to consider by themselves, the articles of charge, article by article.

As to the first article of charge, it was *voted*, that it ought not to be any bar in the way of the Council's proceeding to ordination.

As to the second article Mr. Foster said, that he never did in the most remote sense, deny election; and in the confession of faith, exhibited before the Council, he owns expressly the doctrine of election. Mr. Foster explained himself, and mentioned what he meant, by "Christ dying as much for Judas as for St. Paul." He said Christ by his death, put all men into a salvable state, so that the offers of salvation were with sincerity made to Judas, as well as to Paul and others, and that the reason why Judas was not saved as well as others, was, that he wilfully rejected Christ, and would not come to him that he might have life. †  
*Voted*, that this article as explained, is no just bar in the way of the Council going on to ordain Mr. Foster.

As to the third article, viz. That "there is no enmity in man naturally against God." Mr. Foster fully denied this as asserted; and then proceeded to say, "That the natural man had framed in his mind an unjust representation of the moral character of God, and being conscious

\* It seems Mr. Foster has received farther light since his ordination, for he has written thus, viz. The former part of the 10th article appears to me at present not to be true, D. Foster. I would advise him to take heed, lest the light within him should prove to be darkness.

† I rather conceive Judas believed not, because he was not one of Christ's sheep. See John, x. 26,



he had broke God's law, and that justice was armed against him, and was bound to punish him, he therefore hated God; but that his enmity against God was not pointed against his true or whole character, but against his character as *law-giver and judge*; and that the holy spirit of God, in regeneration, removes from the mind these false apprehensions of God's character, by which means the sinner is brought to love God." *Voted*, That this is no bar in the way of proceeding to ordination.

As to the fourth article, in which Mr. Foster is charged with saying in private, that "original sin is not damning." Mr. Foster allowed that all sin, in its own nature is damning, and that the reason why original sin is not damning, is because of the mediation of Christ and an interest therein, and that men are not delivered from the condemnation of sin, whether original or actual, till they are savingly interested in Christ. *Voted*, that this article of charge as explained by Mr. Foster, is not only no bar against his ordination, but sound divinity.

As to the fifth article, in which the pastor elect is charged with saying in some performance, that an unregenerate man can act a divine faith, or put forth a saving act, as well as the regenerate: He answers, "I suppose he may act faith, equally with the greatest saint; and that neither can act it without." He adds, "That no one ever acted faith, previous to some real, spiritual change: That his design in the performance referred to, is no more than this, that we have an entire dependence upon God, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to do any thing spiritually good, without divine assistance." *Voted*, that this fifth article is no bar against proceeding to ordination.

As to the last article, in which the pastor elect is charged with saying, in the funeral sermon of Madam Szegles deceased, "That it would not be asked in the great day, how we believed, but how we obeyed." Mr. Foster objected against the legality of the charge, as he had not been served with a copy of it: However, upon its being moved that on the whole, it might be best, he consented to say something to it. He granted readily, "That the righteousness and merits of Christ, was the sole ground of a sinner's justification: And that where good men are said to be justified in the great day by their works, such works had faith in Christ as their principle." *Voted*, That the explanation above is satisfactory to the Council.

The council then proceeded, to examine the pastor elect, as to his sentiments upon the most important points of religion, and the motives that influenced him to undertake the ministry; and they voted their satisfaction upon these heads.

It was then voted by the council, that the way is clear to proceed to the ordination of the pastor elect. The following ministers were appointed to the ensuing services, viz. Rev. Dan Foster to make the first prayer: Rev. Mr. Ward to make the prayer before the charge; Rev. Mr. Jones to give the charge; Rev. Mr. Davis to make the prayer after the charge; and Rev. Mr. Piff to give the right hand of fellowship.

*A true copy taken from the original.*

\* I cannot but look upon this as a shocking piece of divinity, and if no bar to ordination, really I dont know what might be termed one.

Septate, viri, Spectate monstrum.

M M

Mr. M. M. M.

Septate

Septate



